1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

By the ceremony of the Mountain Spirits the boys are restored to bodily perfection and are returned to their parents.

Another story tells of the flight of a man from a large force of traditional enemies. He runs, praying, toward a place known to be a home of the Mountain People. At his appeal, Mountain Spirits swarm from the cliff wall, surround the enemy, and drive them into a cave which then closes upon them. This myth emphasizes the protective role of the Mountain People who guard the tribal territory and defend the people from enemies and disease.

Another tale calls attention to the care which must be exercised during the masked-dancer ceremony and indicates the prominent place of the clown in the ritual. A shaman informs the people that he is going to paint masked dancers at a mountain far from the camps. He advises everyone, except the dancers and those who will assist him in preparing them, to stay on the flats below. Particularly does he warn parents to keep their children away from the place, and he reminds his hearers that they are not to call the names of the dancers when the performance begins. A little girl creeps up to the forbidden site, nevertheless, and mentions the name of an impersonator when the dancing starts. The shaman, immediately aware of what has occurred, tries to intercede for her with the Mountain People and finally conceals her under the fire. Soon Mountain Spirits come and displace their impersonators. On each of the first three nights a Mountain Spirit of a different color vainly leads the search for the miscreant. On the fourth night Long Nose or Gray One, the clown, heads the line and succeeds. For her impiety the girl is slain.

Another myth stresses the penalty for disrespect toward the Mountain Spirits and suggests the association between the masked-dancer rite and ceremonial defense against epidemics. Masked dancers are joined by two mysterious strangers who are superlative performers. The people seek to learn their identity. After the dance of the fourth night, riders stationed on swift horses pursue the two strangers. But the fastest mounts are outdistanced, a rock wall opens to receive the runners, and